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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 005077

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TAGS: PHUM PINR PTER PREL PINS CO

SUBJECT: GOC INITIATES INTERAGENCY SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

1. (U) Three months ago the GOC, with SOUTHCOM assistance, established the Coordination Center for Integrated Action (CCAI). The Center is directed by presidential adviser and International Assistance Coordinator Luis Alfonso Hoyos and is staffed by more than ten ministries and agencies. It will design and direct interagency social and economic assistance programs in areas where the armed forces are re-establishing security. Although still in its early stages, the CCAI has identified five target areas -- the former FARC safehaven (despeje) in southern Colombia, the Sierra Nevada, Catatumbo, Arauca Department, and Tumaco -- and begun important social assistance projects in some of the highly conflictive areas. End summary.

Objective: Coordinated, Sustained State Presence

2. (U) Recognizing that stability and state presence will not be established with military and police operations alone, the GOC created the Coordination Center for Integrated Action (CCAI) with SOUTHCOM assistance in early 2004. It is staffed with representatives from the Office of the President, the Ministry of Defense, National Police, Military, Ministry of Interior and Justice (MOI/J), Social Solidarity Network (RSS), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Protection, Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), and Registrar's Office. The Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia), Inspector General (Procuraduria), Human Rights Ombudsman, and other agencies will play an auxiliary role. Presidential adviser and International Assistance Coordinator Luis Alfonso Hoyos is the director. Vice Minister of Defense Andres Penate, Chief of the Joint Staff General Freddy Padilla, and Plan Colombia Director Diego Molano are on the board of directors. President Uribe and his cabinet are strong proponents of the program and have been actively involved in its creation.

3. (U) The CCAI will design and implement interagency social and economic projects in areas that the security forces have secured under Uribe's Democratic Security Strategy. SOUTHCOM provided funding for training and office space. The CCAI has designated five priority areas where they have begun assessing the humanitarian needs and designing appropriate projects. The criteria for these areas were on-going security operations, a traditionally limited state presence, strategic importance, and a heavy presence of illegal armed groups:

-- The former despeje (Cartagena del Chaira and San Vicente del Caguan in Caqueta Department and Miraflores, Calamar, and La Macarena in Guaviare Department) is the focus of Plan Patriota Phase 2B and is FARC-dominated. The National Police recently established a presence in Miraflores and Calamar. One assessment visit was made to Caqueta but the Guaviare assessment trip was cancelled for security reasons.

-- Catatumbo region of Norte de Santander Department is traditionally dominated by the ELN but also has a FARC and paramilitary presence. One assessment trip has been taken.

-- Sierra Nevada region in Magdalena, Cesar, and La Guajira Departments has a heavy paramilitary and ELN presence and some FARC units. It received widespread public attention in late 2003 when the ELN demanded a GOC-sponsored investigation into the "humanitarian crisis" there in exchange for releasing several foreign hostages. Four assessment trips have been taken.

-- Arauca Department was a former "rehabilitation and reconciliation zone," where President Uribe declared a state of emergency and granted the police and military some extended powers early in his term. The Constitutional Court shot down this policy several months later. Arauca is contested by the FARC, paramilitaries, and, less so, the ELN. The Cano Limon oil pipeline has long been an ELN and FARC target and the department is plagued by narcoterrorist-related corruption and violence. U.S. Special Forces help train the 18th Brigade, which is headquartered

there.

-- Tumaco, Narino Department is on the Pacific Coast and a FARC-dominated haven for drug trafficking.

Early Progress

14. (U) Working in coordination, the CCAI has begun key projects:

-- Resource allocation: The RSS has budgeted approximately USD 24,000 to the Sierra Nevada, USD 54,000 to Catatumbo, USD 131,000 to San Vicente del Caguan, and USD 296,000 to Cartagena del Chaira for reconstruction programs. The Social Protection Ministry has allocated USD 123,000 for the Sierra Nevada and USD 106,000 for Caqueta Department.

-- Return of Displaced families: 49 families have been returned to Catatumbo, 350 to La Guajira, and 36 to Cesar.

-- Infrastructure: Renovation of six roads, two bridges, and several schools and hospitals has begun in the Sierra Nevada. Four roads, a water treatment plant, and health clinic are being built in Catatumbo. Four community housing centers are planned for Catatumbo.

-- Health: 750 people have been vaccinated in the Sierra Nevada.

-- Documentation: 149 people in Magdalena Department have received identification cards.

-- Education: 190 new school spaces will be created in Catatumbo.

15. (C) Establishing a state presence in newly secured areas is central to making the security forces' successes permanent. The CCAI will play an important role in ensuring that state services are provided in a well-coordinated manner. Although it was only created three months ago, the CCAI already has begun showing results.
WOOD